

**187. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in
Argentina¹**

Washington, April 29, 1982, 0145Z

115266. Subject: Falkland Islands: Secretary's Meeting With Costa-Mendez.

1. Secret—Entire text.

2. The Secretary met with Foreign Minister Costa Mendez the afternoon of April 28.² Ambassadors Enders and Figueroa and Mr. Service (notetaker) were present.

¹ Source: Reagan Library, Executive Secretariat, NSC Cable File, Falkland File 04/28/1982. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information Immediate to London.

² No memorandum of conversation of this meeting has been found.

3. The essential message Costa-Mendez conveyed was the following: the GOA believes the Rio Treaty MFM resolution³ strengthened its position with Argentine and world opinion, but realizes there are only two options for resolving the Falklands dispute: a continuation of the U.S. effort or through the U.N. The U.N. route would require major readjustments in Argentine foreign policy which the GOA does not want to make (and Costa-Mendez even less), and the outcome would be uncertain. Therefore, Argentina wants the U.S. effort to continue. However, it cannot accept the proposal as it stands;⁴ the GOA has difficulties with what it perceives as lack of a deadline for resolving the sovereignty issue, with the administrative arrangements for the interim period, and with the political resolution article, particularly the reference to the wishes and interests of the inhabitants.

4. The Secretary told Costa-Mendez that only the U.S. is in a position to achieve a satisfactory solution. He understood the reference to adjustments in Argentina's foreign policy, but did not believe any Argentine Government could undertake a close alliance with the Soviets. As for the text of the proposal, the Secretary told Costa-Mendez that we see no prospect for any significant changes being accepted by the British. The UK has serious problems with it as it stands; however, if the GOA agrees to the proposal, we are confident that we can prevail upon the UK to accept, provided full-scale fighting has not yet begun. According to our information (the Secretary stressed again that the British are keeping their plans to themselves), a British attack could begin as early as Friday.⁵

5. The Secretary and Enders went over the three points Costa-Mendez had listed as stumbling blocks, pointing out that the essential concerns of the GOA have been preserved with only minor modifications from the text at the time the Secretary departed Buenos Aires. In other respects, particularly the reference to the Falkland Islands Company, the text has been improved. It is in our judgment a fair and reasonable proposal, one which the U.S. can stand behind. The Secretary then told Costa-Mendez the problem boils down to the question of whether the GOA has confidence in the role of the U.S. He told Costa-Mendez that the U.S. does not act for the U.K., that we have our own interests at stake, both in Europe and in Latin America, and that his government should have no doubts where this process will lead and will be completed within the prescribed time periods. However, if the GOA concludes definitively that it cannot accept the proposal,

³ See footnote 2, Document 185.

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 181.

⁵ April 30.

there should also be no doubt that the U.S. will have to come down strongly on the side of the UK.

6. Costa-Mendez said he would consult with his government and get back to the Secretary as soon as possible with the most essential changes that the GOA requires in the proposed agreement. The Secretary stressed that we must have that response tonight.

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